

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGIE

*Elisa & Dave's Eulogy to their beloved boy, George the Airedale
As given by Elisa at Georgie's Memorial Service
Sunset Hills Cemetery Mausoleum: January 10, 2009*



Dave and I are absolutely heartbroken and devastated by the loss of our beloved Georgie. We are overwhelmed with grief and every breath we have forced ourselves to take during the last 70 hours without our precious George has brought with it a stinging pain in our hearts. As you know, Georgie was larger than life, and his loss creates a huge, gaping void that will never be filled.

Despite our excruciating despair, however, Dave and I wanted to share just a few of our innumerable happy memories with George as well as some of his most special attributes.

I have to preface this, however, by clarifying that there are absolutely no words to adequately articulate the extent to which George enriched our lives or to sufficiently describe the intensity of our bond with him and the depth of our love for him. No sentence could ever begin to describe his exuberant personality ...for his infectious sprit and endearing charm cannot be described in words, you could only experience it...

Back in 1999, after enjoying almost seven years of carefree marriage, unencumbered by dependents, Dave and I weren't even completely sure that we were fully committed to adopting a dog, but when the Airedale breeders, Style Kennels' Mary and Carolyn, brought 8-month-old George over to meet us we both fell in love with him immediately and we didn't even need to discuss it after they left; we knew we wanted him to be part of our lives and we knew right then that we were meant to be together-

We often fondly reminisce about the first day that we met George and we always comment about how we truly cannot even remember what life was even like B.G.(what we call our before Georgie period).

We'll never forget how he made himself at home during that first visit with the breeders, exploring every room in our house, and ultimately bounding back out into the living room dragging with him a stuffed animal that Dave had given me that I kept in the center of our bed.

I knew during that visit that George had completely won Dave over when Dave – who was even much more fastidious in those days than he is now – decided George might

be thirsty and offered him a drink of water which he poured into one of our casserole dishes.

Several weeks later, when George came to live with us, we were so nervous as new parents that we called the breeders several times a day, as we questioned our every move and were so fearful that we would do something wrong that we were both taking Pepto-Bismal and not sleeping through the night.



We still laugh about the fact that we were so worried during our first week with George because he was not going to the bathroom with the frequency with which the breeders told us he should be. After calling them to describe our routine that week, however, they informed us that he probably was not able to “do his business” since we were stalking him around the backyard and following his every move. Sure enough....it turned out that all he needed was a little privacy.

Although we remained over-protective parents, we quickly settled into a comfortable routine, with George at the center of our lives and he exceeded our every expectation. Every waking moment and every decision that we made revolved around our beloved Georgie. He enriched our lives beyond comprehension and was the absolute best thing to ever happen to us. He truly made us a family and he brought out the best in both of us. Dave and I always commented how content we were with our special family of three..it almost seemed too good to be true.... Though we both had our own unique relationship with George, Dave and I each shared a deep connection with him and he was our true, eternal soul mate.

Although Dave and I enjoyed traveling together during our BG period – we never took a traveling vacation after we adopted Georgie and we never, ever, regretted it. We spent our vacations close to home taking Georgie on field-trips to local dog-friendly tourist attractions, with George indulging us by patiently posing for photographs. Wanting to vacation at home with Georgie motivated us to seek out and discover so many beautiful, exciting places in the St Louis area that we would have never been exposed to otherwise while also allowing us to spend extended time with George that a normal work-week did not allow. It usually took George several days to recover from us being home with him for a whole week, which we affection ally called a Georgie “hang over.”

George found enjoyment and excitement in the simplest of things, including our many routines, on which he thrived.



One very consistent routine was George and my walking regiment. Before George got sick last month, we would walk about three-and-a-half miles together every morning at 5am– both weekdays and weekends. The only times we would miss were when it was raining hard or if the road was dangerously icy or snowy or if the temperature was below about 25 degrees, otherwise we never missed a day.

I was never a morning person before George came into my life and -- through our daily early-morning routine – as George and I relished the quiet solitude of the pre-dawn hour, I came to appreciate the magnificence of the constellations and the awesome radiance of the bright moon; and I would always exclaim to George when I looked up into the brilliant morning sky “whoa..George do you see that?” and when I looked down, he was usually excitedly sniffing along the side of the road. We enjoyed literally thousands of breathtaking sunrises and I often joked to Dave that George and I were Buddhist as I used these daily walking opportunities to meditate on the grandeur of the world – as well as George and my place in it. It never mattered what else was going on in my life... when I stepped out of the door with my cherished Georgie and gazed up at the stars, it made me realize how precious life is and what an awesome world we live in...life was good as long as George was at my side. ..

After dinner each night, George and I would drive out to SWIC and walk the bike trail and – whenever he could hear the Metrolink train coming in the distance – he would dance around and bark incessantly.

One regular Metrolink rider, who would routinely catch the train around 8pm to head to his night-shift job in St Louis told us that during a stretch when we couldn't walk due to snow on the trail – he never knew when he pulled into the lot if he was late for the train because he didn't hear “train dog” barking!

Fall was George's favorite season of the year. We always knew when fall was here, for George would always peacefully raise his head and sniff the air when the winds turned cool...which we affectionally began to call the “Georgie breeze.”

George loved to play hide and seek with Dave. I would distract George and Dave would run and hide...when George would turn around and see that Dave was gone he would excitedly run from room to room looking for him...we always laughed, however,

that George wasn't much of a hunter or a tracking dog, as half the time he would walk right past Dave's hiding place several times before realizing that Dave was behind a door....

I always joked that Dave was George's personal masseuse....Dave spent hour upon hour scratching and massaging George and knew all the places that George preferred to be scratched as George would reposition himself until Dave found just the right spot.



George knew that when Dave opened the closet door in the hallway to retrieve towels that it was bath time. George would promptly retreat to the farthest point in the house away from the bathroom where he would hideout – hoping that Dave would get distracted or forget about this whole bath idea. When Dave would track him down, however, and tell him it would be quick and then he and mom could do something fun, George would be a good boy and follow-up him back to the bathroom, though with a dramatic look of resignation.

Despite a steady stream of cars driving down our street, George would always recognize if it was Dave driving in front of the house, and he would leave his front window, run through the house, hop onto the steps to our indoor hot-tub so he could look out the window to see him pulling into the garage, then he would run out of the that room to meet him at the door as he entered....

Most weekends, Dave would make either pancakes or waffles for he and George to share, although George would refuse the pieces that Dave cut up for him unless they had enough butter on them.

George was a fast-food drive-through ice-water conesusier...he would excitedly paw at his car door as we approached the drive-through window and couldn't wait to start lapping up the ice water that we would always order for him, to the delight of the fast-food workers, many of whom would scream when they looked up and were startled to see a big, furry head that they hadn't expected. If the water wasn't cold enough, however, George would sigh and look the other way out the window, refusing to drink the water.

He was also quite particular about the water in his dish at home. He refused to drink tap water and if the bottled or filtered water wasn't cool enough, he would bark at us



until we would refill it with cool water and if he didn't see us put fresh water in his bowl he would bark at us to refill his dish. After we bought a new refrigerator with a filtered water dispenser, we were too nervous to cancel our bottled water delivery until we knew that George would accept filtered water from the new refrigerator .

George LOVED going for rides in the car and he was my faithful co-pilot and driving buddy every single day. Just about the only time that George was NOT in the car with me was when I was driving to and from work. Every evening and every weekend would find George and I driving to our favorite walking locations or running errands and -- for almost ten years -- I never got gas unless George was with me, as I always told Dave I would feel like I was cheating on George if I got gas without him. Many times Dave accused me of creating excuses to drive somewhere, just so George and I could ride around together, and many times he was correct! Unless it was raining, George and I usually had the moon roof wide open -- regardless of the temperature outside....there was nothing better in the world to me than driving down the road, with my arm around George seated next to me on the center console, and the wind in our hair.....

George and I had many favorite stops along our errand-route, and he was well-known at many drive-through windows and retail establishments throughout the metro-east.

Riley's Coffee & Fudge would have Georgie's cup of ice water waiting for him on the counter each Saturday morning when I went in for coffee and the entire weekend crew at the McDonald's drive-through knew George and would always give him a free bag of cookies.

George also loved the large iced sugar cookies from Wood's Bakery in O'Fallon as well as the little bags of iced animal cookies from GasMart, which he would devour in the car on our drive home.

George LOVED his ice cream, and especially enjoyed doggie-sundaes from Dairy Queen, Culver's and McDonald's....



He also looked forward to hotdogs from DQ and Culver's, although it was always difficult to convince him to eat his hotdog first if he knew that ice cream was awaiting him for dessert.

When he would hear the tube being sent through at the bank drive-up, he would jump onto my

lap to sniff it, as he knew that they would be sending him a treat. In fact, we would drive out of our way to patronize only those bank branches that continued to offer doggie treats.

There were literally thousands of times that George made a passing motorist smile, when they would look up and see his smiling face at the window or do a double-take when they realized it was a dog sitting in the passenger seat, since his head was nearly at the same level as mine or Dave's. In fact, one day, I saw a motorist rear-end another car at a stoplight after being distracted by the sight of Georgie.

George had large, knowing, human-like eyes that seemed to stare deep into your soul and reflected his intensity, his intelligence, his affable charm, and his exuberant spirit. One unique way in which he would emote his excitement was to sneeze, which he would do each night when Dave and I would enter the house after work and we would have a joyous homecoming, with George spinning around and sneezing, and his tail wagging excitedly.....

We couldn't stand to be away from George, although we HAD to be away from him to go to work to be able to provide for him, so Dave set up Internet cameras (aka, "the Georgie-cam") that allowed us to check on George via the Internet. Usually the only time Dave and I e-mail each other during the workday was to comment that George was "MIA" -- meaning he wasn't visible via either Internet camera -- or to comment on how cute he looked lounging on his bed (George had his own Select Comfort sleep-number bed where he liked to hang out and observe the activity outside our front window.)

George was our priority for our non-working hours and we turned down many a social invitation – with no regrets – for there was nowhere else that we'd rather be than home as a family with our precious boy. On those occasions in which Dave would convince me to attend a gathering or event and he would be home with George, people were well aware that I had limited time as my "Georgie clock" was running...and I could only stand to be away from George for a brief amount of time. On these occasions I truly felt an ache that can only be described as an intense longing that was only resolved

when I returned home to George....I know now that that intense ache will now become a permanent part of my life.

Through his exuberance, his sparkling personality, his sense of humor, his zest for life, and unconditional love and trust George brought me and Dave immeasurable joy and fulfillment and helped us to relish and appreciate what is special and precious in each and every day.

Although we always felt like we didn't deserve him, we never, ever took a moment with him for granted...we savored each and every minute of our time together.... We are better people for having known him and we only hope that we brought him a mere fraction of the happiness that he gave to us.

We can't even begin to fathom trying to live our lives without him....we feel like our very heart and soul have been ripped from us ...he was not just part of our life, he WAS our life. But in the coming days, weeks, months, and years, as we try to put one foot in front of the other, we are resolved to attempt to emulate the stoic bravery that he exemplified over the past 30 days of his constant barrage of tests and treatments.

We also ask that everyone honor George's memory and perpetuate his spirit by appreciating the simplicity and beauty of nature that Georgie taught us to acknowledge, and by noting his presence each and every time you feel a cool wind blow, which we hope you will here forward acknowledge as your own "Georgie breeze."

GEORGIE'S GRAVESIDE BALLOON RELEASE



Elisa:

These balloons signify George's buoyant personality and as they rise to the sky, they will soar just as George's spirit soared each day of his precious life.

Family & Friends:

Countdown to Release followed by one final exultation of the loud, joyous expression that Elisa evoked to George before EVERY fun activity:

5-4-3-2-1.....YIPPPEEEEE.....GEEOOOOORGIEEEEEEE.....!!!!!!!